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# Nutrition and Home Science in 1943

Broadcast by Ruth Van Deman and Hazel K. Stiebeling, Bureau of Human Nutrition and Home Economics, in the Department of Agriculture's portion of the National Farm and Home Hour, Tuesday, January 11, 1944, over stations associated with the Blue Network.

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RUTH VAN DEMAN: Our guest today is Hazel Stiebeling, Assistant Chief of the Bureau of Human Nutrition and Home Economics. Dr. Stiebeling's here to high-light for us some of the Bureau's work in 1943. This is one of those cases of "she needs no introduction." Dr. Stiebeling's been on this program with us many times before. And, Dr. Stiebeling, I'm sure many of our Farm and Home friends know you also through your family food plans ... and through your studies of what American families are accustomed to eat, and how those food habits measure up by nutrition standards.

HAZEL K. STIEBELING: Of course the war's changing some of our eating habits - at least it's changing the quantity of certain foods available on the market.

VAN DEMAN: That's exactly what we'd like to know ... how the changes in war-time food supplies are affecting the American diet, by and large.

STIEBELING: By and large, the American diet is holding up remarkably well under war conditions. In fact, in certain respects it has improved in the last two years. And I'd like to give a little background, if I may, on how we know that.

VAN DEMAN: Please do.

STIEBELING: From time to time I believe you report to Farm and Home listeners on the estimates of food available for civilian use.

VAN DEMAN: Yes, every now and then we do that.

STIEBELING: Well, as soon as those estimates are worked out, we figure the nutritive values for these amounts of food. We find how many calories of food energy, grams of protein, calcium and other minerals, and how much of the different vitamins this national food supply allows for each person in the United States. We've been doing this long enough now so we can compare one year with another.

VAN DEMAN: And in that way you can tell how the overall civilian food supply rates on the nutritional scale.

STIEBELING: Yes, we get the trend. For instance, for 1943, we know the national food supply gave us more protein than in prewar years.

VAN DEMAN: The fact meat was rationed didn't mean that the total for the nation's families was any less.

STIEBELING: No, rationing is just a fair way of distributing what we've got. And remember, we're including in the protein foods poultry, fish, milk, and eggs.

VAN DEMAN: And soybean products?

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STIEBELING: They didn't figure much in '43. They'll probably be much more important in '44. .... Another marked improvement is in the vitamin C in our diet.

VAN DEMAN: The larger supplies of citrus fruits and tomatoes are responsible for that, I suppose.

STIEBELING: In large measure. Tomatoes from Victory Gardens have helped a lot too .... but there's no way to tell just how much they've contributed.

VAN DEMAN: But even so, we still are not eating as many vitamin-C-rich foods as the best nutrition calls for, are we?

STIEBELING: No. As a nation we could well add a fifth more citrus fruit and tomatoes. And we need to double our supplies of green and yellow vegetables for other food values as well.

VAN DEMAN: Hasn't the National program of enriching white flour and bread stepped up the vitamin B<sub>1</sub> considerably?

STIEBELING: Yes, about a fifth our studies show. That is comparing 1943 with the five years 1935 to '39. And enriched flour and bread has also increased our national total of niacin and of iron. .... Yes, as I said a moment ago the nutritive value of our civilian food supply has risen steadily in spite of the enormous war demands. But each one of us still has to remember this. No matter what foods are in the national larder, our own health and efficiency depends on what we as individuals take out of that larder and eat for breakfast, dinner, and supper, day after day, through the year.

VAN DEMAN: The new wartime family food plans we announced the other day are a big help on that.

STIEBELING: We certainly hope so.... But moving along to some of our other research findings. We're working, in cooperation with other laboratories, to find out how much vitamin and mineral value foods lose in cooking, ... and which ways of cooking save the most nutritive value.

VAN DEMAN: Common ways like boiling, baking, stewing, steaming.

STIEBELING: That's right. On the baking and boiling we've had interesting results with potatoes. White potatoes baked in their skins lost as much as 80 percent of their original vitamin C ... and 50 per cent of their B<sub>1</sub>. But when potatoes were boiled in their skins, the vitamin C loss was only 40 percent. And the vitamin B<sub>1</sub> loss only about 15 to 20 percent.

VAN DEMAN: How are the tests working out with the green and yellow vegetables?

STIEBELING: The leaves lose more of their vitamins than the roots, cooked whole. But of course the more water that's used in the cooking and the more cut and chopped up the vegetables are, the more food value leaches out into the water. But on the whole, vitamin A seems to hold its own remarkably well during cooking.

VAN DEMAN: I suppose the safest rule to get all the good from vegetables is to eat some raw, some cooked.

STIEBELING: Ruth, I think you've already highlighted the work on soya flour and grits, and announced the folder of recipes.

VAN DEMAN: Yes. I haven't told the whole research story by any means.

STIEBELING: These soya products are proving to be excellent low-cost supplements to our other protein foods. For instance, soya flour and grits used with wheat flour, cornmeal or oatmeal supplement the cereal proteins to a marked degree.

VAN DEMAN: And beside studies of food the Bureau worked on clothing and fabric conservation in the Beltsville laboratories.

STIEBELING: Yes. Again I can pick only an example or two. The work on mending men's suits is outstanding. It gives home-makers professional techniques of repairing wool suits and otherwise extending the life of civilian clothing difficult to replace in sales stocks at present. Also people from our staff worked with the Extension Service in designing the uniform for the Women's Land Army. It incorporated a number of very practical "action" features listed first in the earlier designs for women's work clothes.

VAN DEMAN: I expect many of our Farm and Home friends saw these uniforms in plenty of action last summer. .... Well, Dr. Stiebeling, we appreciate very much your coming over today. We know it's far from a complete report to the nation you've been able to give on the nutrition and home economics work. But the latchstring's out ... any time you can come again.

VAN DEMAN: And now here's Wallace Kadderly with that crop news he mentioned.

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